

Jonah and the Big Fish

Lesson 49

Bible Story

Jonah

Teacher Challenge

Nineveh was the great city of the Assyrian empire and would later become its capital. At the time of Jonah, Nineveh was Israel's greatest threat. The cruel acts of the Ninevites certainly showed them to be enemies of God. What would cause the righteous God of Israel to command Jonah to go straight into the middle of God's enemies and warn them of His coming judgment? Love. In fact, God's love for these enemies was so incredible that He didn't let Jonah run away from responsibility.

➔ Who in your life has shown you God's love? How has God's love changed your life?

➔ Who have you shown God's love to? What difference has it made?

God's love for the outsiders in our lives—those different from us in one way or another—is just as great as His love is for us. God's generous grace may make us a little uncomfortable. But ask God to show you a way to communicate His love. Then don't run. Obey! And be blessed.

God's Word
"We will do everything the Lord has said."
Exodus 19:8

God's Word and Me
I can obey God by showing
His love to others.

Teacher's Planning

1. Choose which centers you will provide and the order in which children will participate in them. For tips on schedule planning, see page 9.
2. Plan who will lead each center, making sure to have one adult for approximately every six children. For staffing tips and ideas, see page 12.



Play to Learn

Lesson 49

Active Game Center: Big Fish

Collect

Bible, construction paper, scissors, one lunch-sized paper bag for each child, *Preschool Music #1* CD and player; optional—Lesson 49 Fish Patterns from *Discovering God's Love* CD-ROM.

Prepare

Cut fish in a variety of sizes from construction paper, making one for each child. Make one fish obviously larger than the others. (Optional: Cut fish from CD-ROM Patterns.) Place each fish in a paper bag.

Do

1. Place bags in a circle on the floor. While you play “Love Is” (track 13 on CD), children walk around the circle. After 5 to 10 seconds stop the music. Children pick up the nearest bag.
2. Children open bags to see who has the biggest fish. Collect paper bags, mix them up and play again as time and interest allow.

Talk About

- ➔ **Today in our Bible story, God sent a very BIG fish to help a man named Jonah learn to obey God. Let's play a game to find the biggest fish.**
- ➔ **The Bible says, “We will do everything the Lord has said.” “Lord” is another name for God. Obeying means we say “yes” to what God tells us to do. And then we do it!**
- ➔ **We obey God when we show love to others. Skylar, who are some of the people you love? What are some ways to show love to the people in your family?** (Obey what they tell you. Give them hugs. Say kind words to them.)

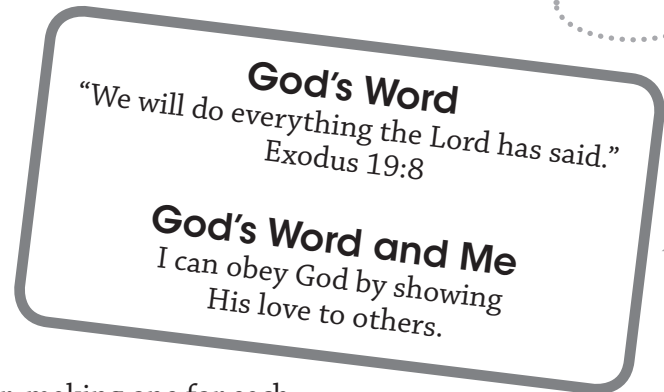


For Younger Children

Young children may not be able to differentiate size. Leave some bags empty. Children open bags to see who has a fish in their bag.

For Older Children

Children order fish by size from smallest to largest.



Play to Learn

Lesson 49

Art Center: My Fish

Prepare

Make a sample fish.

Collect

Bible, newspaper, large paper bags, rubber band, markers.

God's Word
"We will do everything the Lord has said."
Exodus 19:8

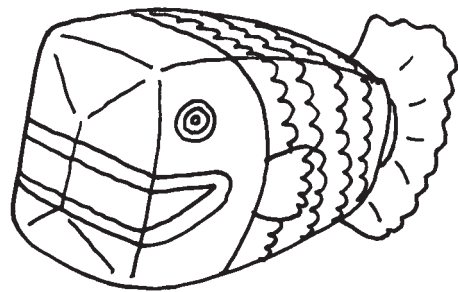
God's Word and Me
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Do

1. Children crumple sheets of newspaper into balls and place in paper bag until bag is $\frac{3}{4}$ full.
2. Assist children to securely wrap a rubber band around neck of bag, forming the tail of the fish.
3. Children use markers to draw details on fish.

Talk About

- ➔ **In our Bible story, God told Jonah to go to Nineveh to tell the people an important message. Jonah disobeyed God and tried to go somewhere else! But God sent a storm and a big fish to give Jonah another chance to obey. Let's make fish to remind us of Jonah!**
- ➔ **The Bible says, "We will do everything the Lord has said." "Lord" is another name for God. When we do what God says, we obey Him.**
- ➔ **One thing God tells us to do is to show His love to others. We obey God when we show love to others! Pray briefly, Dear God, please help us to show love to others.**
- ➔ **Gabriel, who is someone you can show love to? Your brother Jaime? What can you do to show love to Jaime?**



For Younger Children

Draw mouth and eyes of fish on sides of bags before class. Children use markers to color bag before stuffing with newspaper.

For Older Children

Thin glue with water in a shallow pan. Children use brushes or cotton swabs to apply thinned glue to stuffed bags. Children tear off pieces of tissue paper for scales and place onto glue. Children may layer several colors of tissue paper to make fish with interesting color blends/combinations.

Play to Learn

Lesson 49

Block Center: Block Boats

Collect

Bible, blocks.

Do

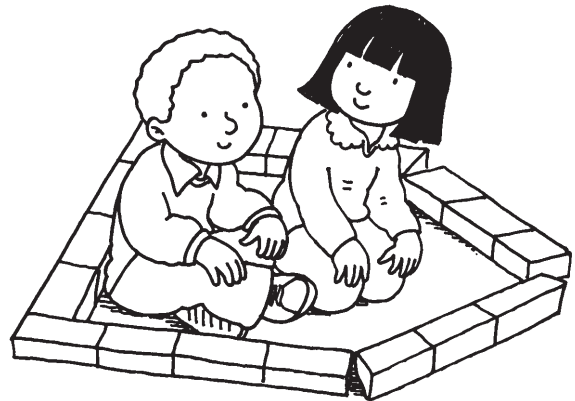
Children lay blocks in the shape of a boat and then climb inside and pretend to row the boat to go on a trip.

God's Word
"We will do everything the Lord has said."
Exodus 19:8

God's Word and Me
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His love to others.

Talk About

- ➔ **In today's Bible story, a man named Jonah did not want to obey God. Jonah tried to run away by sailing away on a boat. God sent a big storm to show Jonah that he needed to obey God. Let's use our blocks to make a boat and pretend to go on a trip.**
- ➔ **Kevin, where do you want to go in our boat? Let's pretend we're in a hurry and row very fast. Now let's pretend we're tired and row very slowly.**
- ➔ **The Bible says, "We will do everything the Lord has said." "Lord" is another name for God. When we do what God says, we obey Him. We can obey God by showing His love to others.**
- ➔ **One way to show love is to help each other. How can we help each other build a boat? How can we help each other when it's time to clean up?**



For Younger Children

Lay masking tape on the floor in the shape of a boat. Children place blocks on the masking-tape line to outline boat. (Note: Remove masking tape immediately after activity.)

For Older Children

Children act out story action as you briefly retell story events (see Tell the Story on page 422). Provide a blanket, a pillow and some buckets or large cups. One child pretends to be Jonah and lies down to sleep. Other children pretend to be sailors, bailing water out of the boat during the storm. A large box can be the fish that swallows Jonah. Expect to retell story several times so that different children can pretend to be Jonah.

Play to Learn

Lesson 49

Science Center: Fish Floaties

Collect

Bible, bowl, water, six to twelve condiment (ketchup, mustard, soy sauce) packets, four 2-liter soda bottles with caps.

Prepare

Place water in bowl. Fill the four soda bottles so each is nearly filled with water.

Do

1. Drop condiment packets into bowl of water. Children select a packet that floats and place packet into a soda bottle. Screw cap on tightly.
2. Children grab the bottle with both hands and squeeze tightly. Children watch as packet sinks. Children release bottle and watch packet rise.
3. Experiment with different condiment packets to find which sinks and floats the best.

Talk About

- ➔ **In our Bible story a large fish swallowed Jonah! Why do you think fish can swim up and down under the water, yet not float to the top? Let's do an experiment to find out.**
- ➔ **Which way does the packet move when you squeeze the bottle? (Down.) Which way does the packet move when you release the bottle? (Up.)**
- ➔ **A bubble of air is sealed inside each packet. When you are not squeezing the bottle the bubble of air is larger, so the packet floats higher. When you squeeze the bottle the bubble is smaller, so the packet sinks. Fish have something called a swim bladder that has air in it. God made fish so they can swim up and down in the water using their swim bladder.**



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For Younger Children

Provide several dishpans and a variety of items that float or sink. Children experiment with items.

For Older Children

Children use an indelible marker to record how high or low the condiment packets move in each bottle. Children compare levels of different packets.

Listen to Learn

Jonah

Lesson 49

Collect

Bible, Bible Story 26 pictures from *God's Story for Me Poster Pack #1*, *Preschool Music #1* CD and player, rhythm instruments.

Greet Each Other

One at a time, say the names of a variety of animals that live in or don't live in the water. Have the children pretend to swim when they hear an animal's name that lives in the water (dolphin, whale, starfish, octopus, etc.) and shake their heads no when they hear an animal's name that doesn't live in the water (rabbit, chicken, cat, dog, tiger, etc.).

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Tell the Story

Open your Bible to Jonah 1. Tell the story using the pictured motions (keywords in bold) or show Bible Story 26 pictures.

Have you ever been fishing? How big was the fish you caught? Listen to hear about a very big fish that caught a man!



Jonah told people messages from God. One day, God told Jonah, "**Go** to Nineveh. Tell the people that they have disobeyed Me."



But Jonah did NOT like the people of Nineveh, so instead of going to Nineveh, Jonah got onto a boat that was going the other way! He did not want to obey God. He went down into the bottom of the boat and went to **sleep**.



God sent a big storm. The waves were crashing. All the sailors were very afraid! But Jonah knew that God had sent the storm because Jonah had disobeyed. Jonah told the sailors, "Throw me into the ocean. Then the storm will stop." One, two, THREE! The sailors threw Jonah into the water. Sure enough, the waves stopped crashing.

The boat was safe. But Jonah was in the ocean! Then God sent a huge **fish**. The fish opened its mouth wide and WHOOSH! Jonah was in the belly of the big fish!



Jonah began to pray. He asked God to forgive him. He thanked God for rescuing him, even though he had disobeyed. Jonah prayed and he waited. Then God sent that big fish close to land. The fish began to cough and choke and AACK!—he coughed Jonah right up onto the beach! Then God talked to Jonah again.

God said, "**Go**! Tell those people they have disobeyed Me!" And this time Jonah obeyed! He went to Nineveh. He told everyone he saw that they had disobeyed God. The people listened. Then they obeyed God. They asked God to forgive them! And God did forgive them.

Talk About the Story

At first, Jonah did not want to obey God. But God sent the big fish to show Jonah that he needed to obey God. What did the people in Nineveh do when Jonah told them they had disobeyed God? (They listened and obeyed God.) **We obey God when we love other people. Who are some people you love? What can you do to show love to them?** (Give them a hug. Say kind words. Help them.)

Sing to God

Let's sing a song that reminds us how to show God's love. Lead children in singing "Love Is" (track 13 on CD). **According to this song, two ways to show love are by being kind and by being patient. We obey God when we show His love to others by being kind and patient.**

Hear and Say God's Word

Holding your Bible open to Exodus 19:8, say verse aloud.

"Lord" is another name for God. We can learn what God says by reading His Word, the Bible. The Bible tells us ways to obey God by showing love to others.

Lead children in repeating the verse by echoing phrases after you: "We will do/everything/the Lord has said."

Point to children when it is their turn to speak. Repeat verse several times in this manner.

Option: Lead children in saying the words in different manners (loudly, softly, in a high voice, in a low voice, whispering, quickly, slowly, etc.).

Option: Ask children to name people for whom they want to thank God and to ask for His help in showing love to them. Volunteers then choose one of the things mentioned and pray to God aloud.

Pray to God

Lead children in prayer thanking God for His Word, the Bible, and that we can learn how to show love to others by reading the Bible. Close prayer by asking for His help to obey Him and show His love to others.

Praise to God

Each child chooses a rhythm instrument and parades around the room playing instrument while you play "Are You Ready?" (track 15 on CD). After 5 to 10 seconds stop the music. Children trade instruments. Children continue parade when music starts, and trade instruments when music stops. **I'm glad you're all ready to obey God! We obey God when we share with others. We obey God when we show His love to others.**

Talk to Learn

Lesson 49

Bible Story Activity Pages Center

Collect

A copy of Activity 26 from *The Big Book of Bible Story Activity Pages #1* for yourself and each child, scissors, crayons or markers; optional—blue tissue paper squares, glue.

Do

Lead children to complete pages following the instructions. (Optional: Children glue tissue paper squares to waves on page.) Use the conversation suggestions as children complete their pages and retell the story.

Preschool Puzzle Center

Collect

Copies of Puzzles 97 and 98 (p. 201 and p. 203 from *The Big Book of Kindergarten Puzzles*) for each child; pencils, crayons or markers.

Do

Children complete the puzzles and color pages. Use the conversation suggestions on the pages.

Read-Aloud Story Center

Collect

A copy of Story Picture 49 from *The Big Book of Read-Aloud Stories #1* for yourself and each child, scissors, tape, crayons or markers.

Do

Read the story and distribute pictures. Use the conversation suggestions as children complete their pages.

